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ABSTRACT

This issue describes the ongoing commitment of Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) to improve the quality of educational policy and practice in the mid-continent region and the U.S. as a whole. Four priority needs areas have been identified and will be the focus of McREL efforts for the next 5 years: (1) failure to support school reform efforts adequately; (2) lack of capacity to use standards to reform classroom practice; (3) declining availability of quality teachers; and (4) lack of leadership capacity to build high-performing learning systems. A letter from McREL's Executive Director reaffirms the laboratory's commitment to educational improvement. The issue also contains a discussion of "Leadership in Support of Systemic Reform," a discussion of "Creating Communities of Learners" in Kansas and South Dakota, and lists of essential education resources from McREL and other agencies and educators. A section titled "On the National Front" discusses a national dialogue on standards-based education in which McREL will participate. "Research from the Field" summarizes some research projects in class size reduction and teacher testing. A message from the McREL Board of Directors closes this issue by discussing the Board's role in educational improvement. (SLD)

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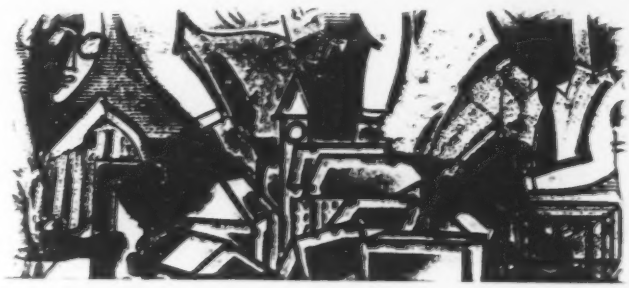
McREL Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

changing schools

a newsletter from the central region educational laboratory
spring 2001

Renewing our commitment to the region and the nation



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McREL Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

changing schools

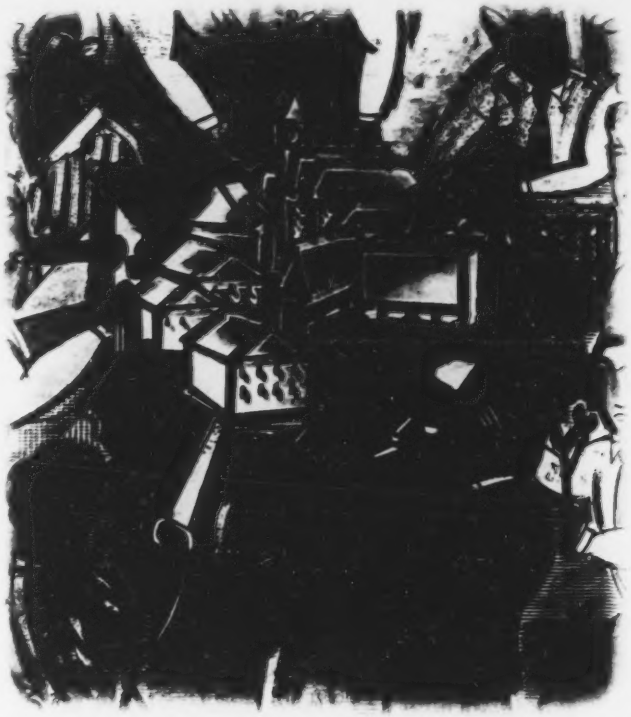
a newsletter from the central region educational laboratory
spring 2001

Renewing our commitment to the region and the nation

Education reform is not always evidenced by broad, sweeping, monumental change. It most often occurs incrementally, painstakingly, in the behind-the-scenes work of dedicated teachers, administrators, parents, researchers, and policymakers. For this reason, McREL is pleased to have renewed its contract with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and to continue the hard work begun 35 years ago.

During these 35 years we've participated in and observed the struggle to change schools and to maximize the potential of every learner. Open classrooms. Integration of technology. Outcomes-based education. Multicultural education. Whole language. Standards. Accountability. School choice. Some reforms have proven more viable than others. What has endured throughout these changes is our commitment to improving the quality of education policy and practice through research, development, and experience.

Our new contract with OERI reflects this ongoing commitment. Based on needs data compiled from a



Gallup survey, McREL board meetings, leadership networks, and field research, McREL has identified four priority problem areas in the region:

- Failure to adequately support school reform efforts
- Lack of capacity to use standards to reform classroom practice
- Declining availability of quality teachers
- Lack of leadership capacity to build high-performing learning systems

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McREL...making a difference in the quality of education and learning for all through excellence in applied research, product development, and service.

Welcome to the latest issue of Changing Schools. *With the renewal of our OERI contract, we're introducing a fresh new look to our publications. We will continue to bring you the latest in local, state, regional, and national educational news and issues. In addition, we will provide information and resources to support you in making a difference in the quality of education and learning for all.*

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send them to Andrea Jachman, McREL, 2550 S. Parker Rd., Suite 500, Aurora, CO 80014-1678, or e-mail ajachman@mcrel.org.

A Letter to the Region

Dear Colleagues,

January 2001 marks the beginning of a new presidential administration and a new contract for McREL as the regional educational laboratory that serves the states in the Central Region. New challenges, new tasks, and new priorities are part and parcel of both of these changes. Yet, some guiding principles remain.

Key among them is a nationwide, shared commitment to the education of all of our children. Polls repeatedly have shown that education is at the forefront of the minds of Americans. In fact, education is the single most important domestic issue in America today. Americans are firm in their resolve that schools should be environments in which every child can learn, thrive, and meet high standards.

Over the next five years, McREL will continue to work with the Central Region community and with partners across the nation to accomplish this goal. A number of recurring themes will form the core of our work — among them, the application of effective instructional practices, teacher quality, accountability with responsibility in a standards-based setting, and the leadership needed to support systemic reform in low-performing schools, particularly those where the achievement gap is most evident.

To complete our work, which focuses on our leadership area of standards-based reform, we will draw on the extensive experience of our staff, capitalize on the cumulative knowledge of high-performing learning communities, and conduct ongoing research about the elements that spell success for students. Another key resource we will be tapping into and making more widely available to our regional and national readers is the expertise and capacity of the more than 1,000 professionals in our sister laboratories and R&D centers. This extensive laboratory system is perhaps one of the most underutilized resources in American education.

Among the many avenues we will use to share knowledge, experience, and findings from research will be quarterly issues of *Changing Schools*. Our commitment is that this newsletter provides you with useful and timely information about the most pressing issues confronting educators today.

Tim Waters
Executive Director

leadership in support of **systemic reform**

"We know a lot about what needs to be done to implement reform," says Brian McNulty, vice president of field services at McREL, "but we are always learning about how to do so most successfully."

Research literature and field experience strongly suggest that a systems approach to reform is key to creating lasting change. Systems theory in education is based on the premise that schools operate as living systems, in complex, dynamic webs, rather than neatly tiered structures. A tremor along one string of the web sets the rest in motion.

In practical terms, this means that school systems must constantly account for the ways in which changes to one part (e.g., reporting of grades) might affect another (e.g., communication with parents and community members). Systemic reform also requires a shift in the way leadership is conceptualized, from a "top-down" model to one of distributed or collaborative leadership. Too often, teachers report feelings of isolation and powerlessness. Where collaborative leadership is practiced, entire school communities — teachers, parents, administrators, and community and business leaders — assume responsibility for the success of students. The very culture of the school is transformed.

"This is not easy work," says McNulty. "Schools are faced with so many challenges and pressures to perform and to change so many things. And change brings discomfort. Rules, roles, and responsibilities are all in flux during the time of transition."

McNulty explains that McREL's role in fostering systemic change is both to provide an array of services to state education agencies, districts, and schools and to generate enthusiasm about the potential of reform. Over the next five years, among other activities, McREL will provide technical assistance and research services designed to help clients align state policies with practices, create effective professional development, and use data-based decision making processes to effect reform. In addition, McREL is engaged in the development of a statewide consortium of low-performing schools in two of our region's states (see related article, p. 4).

> *...schools operate as living systems, in complex, dynamic webs, rather than neatly tiered structures. A tremor along one string of the web sets the rest in motion.*

Finally, McREL will expand upon the McREL Technology Initiative (MTI), already begun in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that technology-based tools can enhance student performance when they are integrated into the curriculum and used in conjunction with knowledge about learning. There are two major components of the MTI: a school technology audit and 12 unique technology workshops. The audit analyzes how teachers teach, how they use technology with students, and how effectively the school's technology resources are being used. The workshops deal with technology management, basic computer skills and the use of specific applications, and using technology in the classroom. The MTI is supported by an extensive evaluation component, including four unique studies on the effectiveness of the initiative.

Technology is only one piece of the puzzle, however. The truly critical piece of systemic reform is the human connection, says McNulty. Bringing people together to dialogue, to share information, and to find solutions to the challenges faced by educators is the hallmark of successful reform. ◆

creating **communities of learners**

Kansas and South Dakota

Transforming low-performing schools into high-performing learning communities is the cornerstone of McREL's work in systemic reform. State education agencies and chief state school officers in our region have repeatedly rated improving performance in high-needs schools as among their top priorities. And this concern is not limited to the Central Region. Across the nation, states are struggling to support schools and districts with endemic problems such as poverty, high mobility, at-risk behaviors, and ethnic and racial tensions.

Low-performing schools are often entrenched with patterns of failure, low expectations, and poor community relations. Working separately, teachers, administrators, parents and community members may become frustrated and discouraged. Says Andy Tompkins, commissioner of education for the Kansas State Board of Education, "It's an incredible challenge. We know that having a low-performing school does *not* mean that people aren't working hard — we simply have to do some extraordinary things to support and assist them."

Building consensus on problems and solutions

In response to this need, McREL is working with two states in our region, South Dakota and Kansas, to create statewide consortia of low-performing schools. Consortium schools, supported by mentors from successful schools, will work to transform themselves into high-performing learning communities through professional development activities, collegial learning, data-based decision making, and technical assistance from McREL.

McREL will work with a number of schools in each state. Each site will select members for a School Leadership Team, which will include both teachers and administrators. One of the team's first responsibilities will be to define a vision and establish concrete goals for improving student performance. As Brian McNulty, McREL's vice president of field services, points out, "If there's no consensus on the problem, how can there be consensus on the solution?"

> *We know that having a low-performing school does not mean that people aren't working hard — we simply have to do some extraordinary things to support and assist them.*

Participants will be involved in a summer leadership academy and two follow-up institutes during the school year. In these sessions, McREL staff and selected education experts will provide training in a variety of areas, including reform strategies, resource allocation, data gathering, standards and assessment, and instructional strategies for mathematics, science, and literacy.

Throughout the year, leadership teams will work with a mentor to meet their improvement goals. "Mentoring is key to this initiative," says McNulty. "People learn best from those who have actually been in the trenches." Mentors will be selected from either the ranks of teachers and administrators in successful schools or those who have received Teacher or Principal of the Year awards. They will serve as resources to consortium schools by attending institutes and by providing regular guidance and on-site support.

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Focus Your Technology Resources to Help Students Learn

Let McREL conduct a Technology for Learning audit to identify your technology capabilities and needs.

Select from 12 workshops to help teachers use technology effectively in the classroom.

Technology Management
- Technology Leadership
- Technology Planning
- Software Evaluation
- Classroom Technology Management

Technology Training
- Basic Computer Skills
- Technology Applications
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- Lesson Plan Integration
- Technology and Problem-Solving Process
- Technology and Writing Integration

For more information and pricing, call McREL at 303.337.0990, e-mail info@mcrel.org, or visit our Web site at http://www.mcrel.org/products/tech/facilitator.asp.

McREL's Technology Initiative...*making technology work in schools*

creating communities of learners

continued from page 4

Ongoing efforts

But the work doesn't end there. "Ultimately," says Ray Christensen, secretary of education for South Dakota, "we'd like to create a replicable model for school improvement that works for people in our state — and raise the bar for everyone. No matter where a school falls on the spectrum, we should always be moving toward improvement."

> ***No matter where a school falls on the spectrum, we should always be moving toward improvement.***

One significant way in which sites will participate is by providing student performance data. McREL will analyze the data and conduct research and evaluation studies to measure program and student progress. Data can be used to adjust existing programs where necessary and to develop programs in new sites across the region. Of particular interest is the contrast between the two states' selected sites: Kansas sites will be primarily urban, whereas South Dakota sites will be a mix of rural and reservation schools.

For further information about McREL's work with low-performing schools, contact Nilda Simms at 303.632.5565 or nsimms@mcrel.org. ◆

renewing our commitment to the region and the nation

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McREL was also awarded "standards-based instructional practice" as its national leadership area. Responding to then-Secretary Riley's call for a midcourse review of the standards movement, McREL is initiating a national dialogue on standards (see related article, p. 8). In addition to this far-reaching dialogue, McREL will build on its existing research and development efforts, provide standards-related resources and services to the region and nation, and be a resource for cross-laboratory professional development.

Over the next year, *Changing Schools* will examine each of the four problem areas in depth, bringing you information on McREL's work in the area and the effect it is having on the face of education in the region. We will also link these regional problem areas to issues and research occurring on the national front. In this issue, we focus on McREL's work in supporting systemic school reform.

After thirty-five years we have much to be proud of and much still to strive for. We look forward to continuing to build our relationships with our constituents, furthering the research we've begun, translating findings into practice, fostering collaborations with other research organizations, and, ultimately, contributing to the improvement of education for all.

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essential *education resources*

Noteworthy Perspectives on Excellence in the Central Region (2000)

by McREL, 64 pages, $5

This publication features educators in McREL's region — Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming — who have received national recognition for their innovative ideas, exceptional instructional practices, or outstanding leadership. Articles focus on the strategies that schools and practitioners are using with positive results. Collectively, these articles offer a thorough discussion of standards-based education, organizational capacity, human motivation and development, and community outreach and parent involvement.

Noteworthy Perspectives on Implementing Standards-Based Education (2000)

by McREL, 50 pages, $5

This publication draws on the insights and expertise of teachers from across the country who are engaged in the difficult process of standards-based reform. Teachers relate their fears, frustrations, and successes with implementing standards in the classroom. Also included is practical guidance on supporting teachers in ways that help them realize the potential of standards-based education.

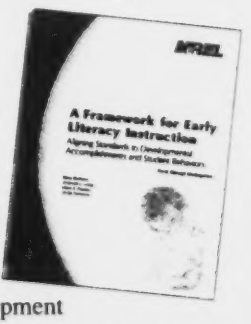
Principles in Action: Stories of Award-Winning Professional Development (2000)

by McREL, $15

High-quality professional development leading to increased student achievement is the subject of this engaging documentary-style video, which explores the real-life experiences of four winners of the U.S. Department of Education's National Award for Model Professional Development. Two schools — Montview Elementary School in Aurora, Colorado, and Woodrow Wilson Elementary School in Manhattan, Kansas — demonstrate the power of a school team working together with a common focus. Two districts — Olathe District Schools and Lawrence Public Schools — both in Kansas, show how to encourage and support an environment for teacher and administrator learning. Suitable for a variety of audiences, from school improvement teams to district administrators to policy makers.

A Framework for Early Literacy Instruction: Aligning Standards to Developmental Accomplishments and Student Behaviors, Pre-K Through Kindergarten (2000)

by Elena Bodrova, Deborah J. Leong, Diane E. Paynter, and Dmitri Semenov, 33 pages, free while supplies last



This publication includes standards and benchmarks for early literacy. These standards and benchmarks reflect the foundational knowledge needs of very young learners and recognize their unique developmental characteristics, as indicated by the research on early literacy development at the pre-K and kindergarten levels. This document also provides more detailed guidance for early literacy instruction than that currently available from state and national documents.

Asking the Right Questions: A Leader's Guide to Systems Thinking About School Improvement (2000)

by McREL, 34 pages, $15

This guidebook attempts to simplify systems theory by defining three domains of school systems: the technical, personal, and organizational. Using these domains as lenses through which to view school systems, it offers a process for considering the ways in which changes to one part of the system will affect other parts. It then provides three examples of what it means to "think systemically" and the benefits of doing so.

Change Through Inquiry (2000)

This microsite on the McREL Web site is designed for educators who are undertaking a school improvement effort. The Web site builds upon the concepts in *Asking the Right Questions*. This online resource not only helps school leaders think about the three domains of school systems, but it also provides access to a wide array of resources, created by McREL and other laboratories, related to every aspect of education systems.
Available online at www.mcrel.org/toolkit

What Works in Classroom Instruction (2000)

by Robert J. Marzano, Barbara B. Gaddy, and Ceri Dean, 178 pages, $25

The purpose of this publication is to provide educators with instructional strategies that research shows have the greatest likelihood of positively affecting student learning. The publication is designed for K–12 classroom teachers, building-level administrators, and central office administrators. It is offered as a tool to enhance students' achievement in any content area.

Implementing Education Reform: Strategies Used by States, Districts, and Schools (2000)

by the Regional Educational Laboratory Network, 20 pages, online only

This publication, the third in a series of issues briefs, summarizes a collaborative three-phase study undertaken in 1998–2000 by regional education laboratory researchers. The intent of the study was to examine reform at the state, district, and school levels, identify key elements of approaches at each level, and disseminate the practical advice gleaned from the findings to policymakers and education leaders. Examples of successful reform efforts are included.

Including Special Needs Students in Standards-Based Reform: A Report on McREL's Diversity Roundtable III (2000)

by McREL, 69 pages, online only

This publication contains three research-based papers that served as the catalyst for discussions at McREL's third diversity roundtable, held September 14–15, 2000. Each paper details current policies and practices relative to the inclusion of special needs students in standards-based reform. Suggestions for helping teachers acquire the information and skills they need to improve instruction for students with special needs are included.

Policy Briefs

6–8 pages, online only

McREL policy briefs offer research-based discussions of issues of primary concern to local and state policymakers across the nation.

Charter School Equity Issues: Focus on Minority and At-Risk Students (November 2000)

Early Literacy: New Issues and New Challenges (October 2000)

Ensuring Quality Teachers Through Alternative Certification Programs (October 2000)

Students with Disabilities and Standards-Based Reform (October 2000)

Raising the Achievement of Low-Performing Students (May 2000)

Rural Schools: Diverse Needs Call for Flexible Policies (May 2000)

High-Stakes Testing: Trends and Issues (April 2000)

Standards-Based Accountability Systems (April 2000)

The Impact of Technology on Learning: Making Sense of the Research (May 1999)

Improving Teacher Quality: Issues and Policies (June 1999)

For a complete list and online access to McREL's publications and products, please visit our Web site at www.mcrel.org/products. You may also e-mail us at info@mcrel.org or call 303.337.0990.

On the national front

Partners champion a national dialogue on standards-based education

"When people talk, listen completely." This was the advice of Ernest Hemingway to would-be writers on how to write realistic dialogue. It is also the key to creating a collective vision.

Everyone talks about education, but certain hot-button issues spark greater controversy then others. Implementing standards-based approaches, high-stakes testing, and tough accountability measures are three of the more volatile areas of discussion. As a way of responding to these uncertainties about the standards movement, former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley advised the nation to "have a healthy and ongoing dialogue with parents and teachers."

McREL agrees and is joining the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) and the Berkana Institute of Provo, Utah, an education and research foundation, to initiate a unique national conversation about standards-based reform. The National Dialogue for Standards-Based Education will occur at all levels — national, regional, state, and local — and provide a forum for sharing success stories, research, beliefs, and underlying assumptions.

The partners intend to give communities and educators who hold varying perspectives a chance to build a collective vision of what we want our education system to be. The foremost question to be asked is, What have we learned about how to best serve our children? To answer that, the dialogue will address these issues:

- Refining and continuing the standards-based reform movement
- Building on what we've learned from research and practice about how to improve teaching and learning
- Encouraging shared responsibility for helping all students achieve high standards

The first planning meeting for the dialogue was held November 8–10, 2000, in Denver, Colorado. Forty participants attended, including students, parents, and leaders from numerous education organizations.

A spring kick-off event will be held in Kansas City, Missouri, in April 2001. Some 200 educators and community members from the McREL and NCREL regions and from around the nation will be invited. Once begun, the dialogue will be facilitated and sustained through local, regional, and national events, connected through an interactive Web site.

For more information about the National Dialogue, call 1.877.846.2332 or visit our Web site at www.nationaldialogue.org. You may also e-mail Bryan Goodwin at dialogueinfo@mcrel.org. ◆

RESEARCH FROM THE FIELD

Lessons learned from California's class-size reduction program

A recently published paper drawn from California's evaluation of its class-size reduction program provides important information for policymakers and researchers. California's program costs over a billion dollars a year and has affected over 1.6 million K–3 students by reducing average class sizes from about 30 to under 20. There is evidence that the program resulted in higher student achievement scores. At the same time, implementation was slower in schools that serve high proportions of at-risk students (e.g., poor, minority and limited English proficient). These schools also saw larger decreases in teacher preparation levels as well as a loss of more specialized classrooms (e.g., art, music, special education, and child care) to meet the need for more regular classrooms created by the state's class-size reduction program.

The authors report lessons learned from the implementation of California's program. First, large programs such as this require planning, preparation, and research to avoid unintended consequences, such as declining teacher quality and facility shortages. Second, to avoid increasing inequities, the resources districts receive to implement a class-size reduction program should be tied to student need or to the cost of reducing class size. Third, to reduce costs, states should use a flexible funding formula, such as one based on average class size across a district, rather than holding individual classrooms to a strict policy goal. Fourth, more research is needed on the question of what classroom practices are best for smaller classes. Finally, since class-size reduction is a very expensive undertaking, more research into its cost-effectiveness is needed.

Bohrnstedt, G. W, Stecher B. M., & Wiley, E. W. (2000). The California class size reduction evaluation: Lessons learned. In M. C. Wang & J. D. Finn (Eds.), *How small classes help teachers do their best* (pp. 201-225). Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education.

For contrasting views on the effectiveness of class-size reduction, see Eric Hanushek and Alan Krueger's paper *The Class Size Policy Debate* (working paper #121), located in the education section of the Economic Policy Institute's Web site at http://www.epinet.org.

Linking teacher testing to teacher quality

Policymakers and others involved in teacher education have viewed teacher testing as one way to ensure a quality teaching force. A 1999 study by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) examined the academic and demographic characteristics of teacher candidates across the nation in relation to their scores on the ETS Praxis I and II C tests used for college of education entrance and for teacher licensing, respectively. The results showed that those who scored higher on the Praxis tests also had higher scores on academic exams such as the ACT or SAT. Among those who passed the Praxis II, candidates with majors in a content area such as science or English had higher SAT scores than those without a content emphasis. In addition, students who attended teacher education institutions that are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education passed the Praxis II at a higher rate than students who attended other institutions.

Although the results of this study demonstrated a positive relationship between scores on teaching tests and the academic quality of prospective teachers, the study also found that raising standards by requiring higher passing scores could amplify problems of supply and ethnic and racial diversity. The authors conclude that higher standards must "be accompanied by aggressive efforts to support and enhance all candidates' knowledge and abilities so they stand a better chance of meeting those high standards" (p. 39).

Gitomer, D. H., Latham, A. S., & Ziomek, R. (1999). *The academic quality of prospective teachers: The impact of admissions and licensure testing*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Available: ftp://etsis1.ets.org/pub/tandl/225033.pdf

DIRECT FROM THE BOARD

Boards of Directors *can* make a difference. When their members have a vision and fervently held beliefs, they can significantly influence policy, assist in clearly articulating mission statements, and support leadership that is committed to fulfilling long-term goals.

McREL's Board of Directors strives to be such a board by taking an active role in setting the policy of the organization and guiding its work. The board ensures that McREL implements programs that help accomplish its mission and allocates its resources effectively. The 25-member board works collaboratively with the management of McREL to make informed decisions, and the Central Region states, which they represent (Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming), reap the benefits.

Committed to meeting the diverse needs of the region, the board strives to include teachers, administrators, researchers, and representatives of minority groups among its membership. Each of the seven states is represented by three board members — the chief state school officer, a professional educator, and a non-educator. In addition, four individuals fill "at-large" seats. "Our board members are not compensated financially," notes Carol Sager, McREL's chief financial officer. "Having such a structure ensures board members make independent, objective decisions," she explains.

McREL's board meets three times a year to discuss progress and future plans. These sessions give members substantial exposure to McREL's work in the field. As a result, "We have a board that is supportive and understands our work," explains Lou Cicchinelli, McREL deputy director and Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) project manager. Meetings also are opportunities for representatives to speak for their constituency, giving McREL a clear picture of the needs in each state. The board played a significant role during the development of the REL proposal by making suggestions, helping refine the scope of the laboratory's work, and advising how to best meet the region's needs. "Their advice was taken to heart and infused throughout the proposal," notes Cicchinelli.

Many dedicated individuals serve on McREL's board. Donna Mathern, principal of Evansville School in Evansville, Wyoming; Judith Richards, a member of the Wyoming State Board of Education; and Terry Loschen, a former member of the Nebraska State Board of Education, joined the McREL Board of Directors in September 2000. Mike Middleton, deputy chancellor of the University of Missouri at Columbia, and Henry Gonzales, assistant superintendent of Pueblo, Colorado School District No. 6, were also recently elected to the board.

Marjorie Smith is beginning her role as chair this year. Smith brings her experience as a parent of seven and her insights as a former elementary school teacher to her new position. After 13 years on the St. Louis Board of Education, she is currently education liaison for the mayor of St. Louis. She is quick to identify serving the at-risk student population as one of her priorities, and she sees McREL's work in the areas of teacher quality and early literacy as melding with this crucial needs area. "Teachers need more training in how to work with at-risk and special needs students," she explains.

Tim Witsman now assumes the position of immediate past chair. Witsman is president of the Wichita Chamber of Commerce in Wichita, Kansas, where he also is CEO for the Kansas World Trade Center. Witsman, a former professor and teacher, has 14 years' experience in management of local governments. He brings a unique business perspective to the board and agrees that oversight, or keeping the organization on task, is the board's foremost responsibility.

To stay on target and to ensure high-quality services, McREL's board has worked to de-emphasize reporting and focus more on achieving positive outcomes. Reports are valuable, Witsman acknowledges, and board members always need to be informed, but an effective board goes beyond information sharing to help the organization refine its mission. To facilitate conversations with staff, the board now uses a question-and-answer format for its meeting agenda. For example, questions like these might be asked about a project:

- What problem is our work intended to address?
- What impact did our work have?
- What have we learned that may have broader value to the region?

"McREL's role is to present rigorous research, grounded in fact," says Witsman, who views accountability, credibility, and stability as strong aspects of the McREL organization. With a board that is both supportive and demanding, McREL will continue to focus on results and promote systemic improvements in education.

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open this *newsletter* to read about *creating communities* of learners

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